



Taking Charge of Your Building's Budget

Why go this route?

- Because you can focus resources from supplemental funds to support student achievement.
- Because you can help put “legs” under your school improvement plan by funding projects or ideas that matter.
- Because you’ll acquire a better understanding of the purposes and requirements of programs you’re involved with.
- Because you can help eliminate duplication and fragmentation of services to eligible students.

You’ll know you’ve arrived when...

- You have an educated understanding of the supplemental funds available to your building.
- Your supplemental funds are coordinated and focused on what you most want to do.
- A cadre of stakeholders shares understanding and responsibility for your funding plan.
- You’ve maximized use of supplemental funds on increased student achievement.
- Services and funds from many sources are focused on eligible students.

Construction Zone

Schedule this planning activity in the spring of the year when school improvement plans are being evaluated and updated.

Districts apply for these funds on a yearly basis with a budget of proposed activities and expenditures, probably by July 1.

Check with your district for its deadlines and timelines, as well.



It's About TIME

- This will take focused time over 3-4 weeks. It could take 2-5 meetings, depending on team member orientation, are familiarity with each other and the budget process.



Potential COSTS

- You might want to hire a facilitator to guide you through a workshop on budget decision-making.



The Process

*A step-by-step guide
to taking charge of your
building's budget.*

NOTE: Steps marked with a  are accompanied by one or more inserts, included in this packet.

1 Identify sources of funding available to your district.

It's worth your while to become familiar with what's required and what's flexible about these programs. You can check your district's "consolidated funding application" on line by going to the MDE website (www.michigan.gov/mde) clicking on Keywords... then OFS Allocations 2003–2004... then Consolidated Federal Program Allocations Reports. Look up your district and jot down the funded programs in your district.

Get familiar with those programs.

Get a cup of coffee and close your door for an hour. Refer to Insert for Step 2 to see the first page. Open the file on your MI-Map disk or website entitled "Office of Field Services Program Overview" and print it out. Highlight the state and federal programs that concern you and your district. Read through each of them, paying attention to how each type of fund can be used.

3 Get a clear picture of how your building CURRENTLY uses its funds.

Make an appointment to speak with your district's program coordinator(s) for these programs. Work through the process program by program and ask for the dollar amount and the use of any portion of the program funds that are assigned to your building. Take notes on the worksheet provided in INSERT for Step 3.

4 Prioritize options that support your building's improvement plan.

Think through your building's vision (See MI-Map Packet 2.1 for a process for agreeing on a shared vision). Pick out practical, concrete changes with financial implications (purchases, hires, time assignments, etc.) that would move you visibly and powerfully in that direction. List them in order from most to least powerful. Use INSERT for Step 4 as a worksheet.

5 Identify program funds that COULD be shifted to your first priority.

Use the Office of Field Services "Quick Guide to Allowable Use of Funds" (INSERT for Step 5) to search for programs whose funds could be shifted to your highest priority initiative. Find as many as you can, but don't decide among them yet. Use the bottom half of INSERT for Step 3 to jot down your possible use under each column that MIGHT be useable (regardless of current, competing uses). Repeat for your first 3-4 priorities.

6 Now weigh the costs.

With a rough estimate of costs for your first priority in mind, browse through the columns where it COULD be funded, looking for the current use you'd be most willing to trade for it. Remember that the current use might be able to be transferred to another eligible funding source. Repeat the process. See the insert for Step 6.

7 Make your case to district coordinators. These funds are applied for by the district, and your ideas will have to be incorporated into the consolidated application.

See MI-Map Packet 2.2 "Choosing Smart Risks" for a process for thinking carefully through the politics of proposing a different way of doing things. Do your best to anticipate what problems this might cause for district administrators and to propose ways to meet THEIR needs while giving your building the flexibility needed to help improve student achievement.



Getting more mileage from taking charge of your building's budget

How focusing your use of supplemental funds benefits your school in regard to the following initiatives:

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

- NCLB requires coordination and integration of all state and federal funding sources: Title I (Parts A,C and D), Title II (Parts A and D) Title III, Title IV (Safe and Drug Free), Title V, Title VI, Title X (Part C Homeless), Comprehensive School Reform, Reading First, Early Reading First, Head Start, Even Start, Preschool programs, 21st Century Community Grants, Violence Prevention Programs, Perkins Grants and nutrition programs. These funds are tied together with common threads: professional development, "highly qualified" providers, technology, parent involvement, scientifically research-based instruction and student achievement.

Education YES!

- Performance indicators (2.1 Learning Community) require allocation of resources in support of school improvement goals.
- Performance indicators (4.3 Support and Sustainability) require documentation of the allocation of resources in support of professional development, including time and availability of appropriate information age technology.

MI-Plan

- Coordination of resources is a part of the action plan developed as strategies to accomplish student achievement goals.



Resources

People

Specialists

Most Intermediate School Districts have a specialist working with schools on resource allocation in their service areas.

MDE's Office of School Improvement field service representatives are in the field so much that e-mail is often the best way to contact them. See www.mde.state.mi.us and click on Office of Field Services to get the e-address of your closest specialist.

Coaches

The *Alliance for Building Capacity in Schools* website lists coaches whose training has been provided by Michigan State University and supported by the Michigan Department of Education. Some are active in school improvement implementation in Michigan schools. Please visit:

www.abciscoaches.org

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www.michigan.gov/mde